

February 24, 1997

The Honorable George Miller
Senior Democratic Member
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Miller:

Thank you for your letter of December 12, 1996, which has been most helpful as we have structured a program which attempts to balance the need for specificity with the need for an open, collaborative decision making process. We greatly appreciate the interest you and your staff have shown toward the CALFED Bay-Delta Program and value your advice.

You make excellent points regarding the funding opportunities authorized pursuant to the California Bay-Delta Environmental Enhancement and Water Security Act; requests must be targeted at restoration needs and be honest, realistic, and specific.

The enclosed budget estimate reflects an emphasis on ecosystem restoration for Federal expenditures in Fiscal Year 1998. As discussed and recognized by the CALFED agencies, these funds would be expended in cooperation with Program expenses under the CVPIA and other programs aimed at improving the ecosystem functions and habitats of the Bay-Delta watershed. In developing these estimates there were extensive agency discussions on what level of funds could be spent effectively within the first year of Program implementation. We continue to refine the process and the actions in an effort to provide Congress, CALFED agencies, and the public with the greatest detail.

In order to properly make decisions on funding projects prior to the completion of the Draft and Final environmental documents, projects pursued for early implementation must meet the following criteria:

- * have appropriate environmental documentation;
- * have no significant environmental impacts;
- * have no significant adverse cumulative impacts;
- * not limit the choice of a reasonable range of alternatives; and
- * not affect the selection of a Preferred Program.

CALFED Agencies

California

The Resources Agency
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Water Resources
California Environmental Protection Agency
State Water Resources Control Board

Federal

Environmental Protection Agency
Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Reclamation
Department of Commerce
National Marine Fisheries Service

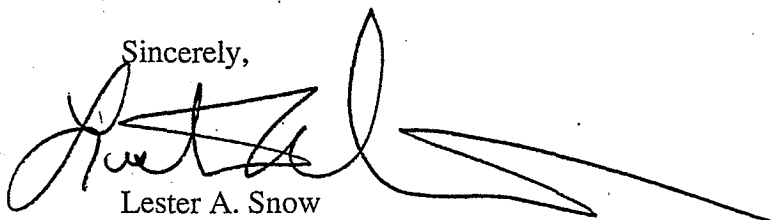
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The budget estimate includes category level actions (such as restoration of 10,000 to 20,000 acres of permanent and seasonal wetlands habitat in the Delta). The process to identify specific projects will include both agencies and stakeholders. The key groups involved in project decision making include Federal and State CALFED agency staff, the Ecosystem Roundtable -- a group of stakeholders representing the various interests in the Bay Delta system, and the CALFED agency decision makers.

Each year, an agency team will develop a draft set of projects and programs to be considered for funding. This this will go to the Roundtable and CALFED management for review and discussion. Final decisions on project selection will be made by the CALFED decision makers. Additionally, as part of the President's budget, the Secretary of the Interior is responsible for approving a spending plan for the Federal money expended as part of this effort. We are confident that the agency/stakeholder project selection process now underway through CALFED will result in the funding of high quality programs and projects which will, over time, directly improve the health of the Bay-Delta system. We expect to have a well-considered list of specific projects by late Spring of 1997.

Thank you again for your continued support of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. I look forward to meeting with you in Washington on Thursday the 27th to discuss this further and answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Lester A. Snow
Executive Director

Enclosure